

St. Charles County Region
Adult Program Improvement Plan
Program Year 2005
March 16, 2006
(updated 3/22/06)

In its letter of November 14, 2005 the Division of Workforce Development (DWD) advised St. Charles County and its Workforce Investment Board (WIB) of a “sanction” for failure of performance for the WIA Adult program for two consecutive years. This failure occurred with two measures; Adult Earnings Change and Adult Credential Attainment. The WIB was requested to prepare a “Performance Improvement Plan” to address improvement in these two measures and to be submitted to DWD as a local plan modification.

At the December 7, 2005 WIB meeting the Board voted to acknowledge the letter from DWD and to accept the recommendations contained therein. In later discussion the WIB had a wide ranging discussion of history and other factors. While these were felt to be valuable in providing context, it did not deter from the underlying need to move forward and address the issues at hand.

For ease of reference this plan will begin with the recommendations made in the original letter from DWD. This will be done by starting with each recommendation and the Region’s response, in thought and/or action. After working through those recommendations the plan will discuss any other topics arising from the local discussion that will contribute to this effort. Any attachments, illustrations of further policy statements that are referenced or are supportive of the narrative will be added at the end of this document.

Part I

Staff should review all current practices and take immediate action to improve public information, advertising and marketing methods used to inform adults of WIA services available to them through the Career Center.

Beginning with a meeting on October 28, 2005, staff meetings have been held to initiate the process of reviewing current practices with the intent of creating and implementing strategies for change. Minutes of these meetings are shared with all participating staff and are maintained in a central file for ready reference. These minutes are also to be shared with DWD and forwarded on the last day of the month. (A copy of this file to date is included as attachment #1.) These meetings are initially intended to be weekly and will focus on general process and case specifics.

The following recommendations have been generated from these meetings (each followed by a brief outline of progress or plans for action).

1. Contact Lindenwood University about offering assistance to graduating seniors with resume preparation and other job search activities. The intention is to help with core services and utilize this contact as an inroad to identify potential adult eligible individuals in need of registered core or intensive services. (A contact with the placement office resulted in a determination that this was not practical.)
2. Dual enrollment with CAP was discussed, Jenny Warren was charged with discussing this with CAP staff. This process was to begin immediately and to become an ongoing interaction with the CAP staff. Progress in this effort would be reviewed at following staff meetings.
 - As each case is added it is discussed at the weekly staff meeting and noted in the minutes. At that time a performance matrix form is prepared to track the case situation and plan for outcomes. A copy of this form is maintained in the individual file and a copy maintained in a binder kept by the Assistant Department Director. (See attachment 2 for a copy of this form. It is an Excel spreadsheet that will be attached to an Access database to provide needed functionality.)
 - At this same time we are working on an Access database (see attachment 3 for current version) for a copy of the current input document) to aid in tracking and managing cases, active and closed, in the program. This database will be a part of the above process as well.
3. The Region is currently working with three of the four domestic violence shelters in the area, offering to take our services to their location or some neutral location. We are also working on establishing contacts at the fourth.
 - An outreach file is being maintained by Ivy Patti to track results of this and other efforts. These results will be discussed at weekly staff meetings and will be part of the consideration for future efforts.
4. In August, 2005 the Region entered into an MOU with a local Section 8 Housing Centers (LOVE Inc.) to provide WIA services on site. (See attachment #4.)
 - Ivy Patti works directly with this agency. Currently they notify her directly when they have someone needing services or they have a group interested in one of our core workshops. Any activity is reported at the weekly meeting and reported in the minutes.
5. The Region is sending letters to local law offices explaining services for newly displaced homemakers due to a spouse's death or divorce.
 - These letters have been sent with Ivy Patti's name as the contact person. She maintains information on any responses in the outreach file which is reviewed at the weekly staff meeting. (Letters have been sent to 112 law firms.)
6. The Region has had several recent articles in local newspapers highlighting services.
 - These articles have not been specifically focused on one program or another. They cover the full range of services available at the center. To date we have

not used the public media to focus on economically disadvantaged populations as they tend not to be effective for that population and we are trying to avoid the broader public viewing this as our only service population.

7. Two Career Center staff are scheduled to speak at the April Community Council luncheon. This will provide an outreach opportunity to case workers at area agencies serving similar populations.
 - Ivy Patti will be one of these speakers. Ms. Patti will provide her name and contact information for referral and any results from this contact will be maintained in the outreach file. (The other speaker will be discussing business services.)
8. Partnering with Sts. Joachim and Ann, local not for profit, in providing job search services to homeless adults through a grant Sts. Joachim and Ann received from the Enterprise.
 - Sts. Joachim and Ann is still working on their procedures. As this progresses a formal referral process will be put in place that will aid in tracking results.
9. Sending letters to grief support group leaders at area funeral homes
 - Letters have been sent with Ivy Patti listed as the contact. Ivy will track any referrals received and document them in the outreach file. (Letters have been sent to 21 funeral homes in the Region.)
10. Sending program pamphlets to area subsidized housing providers for low income renters. The pamphlets would be sent to area landlords with their subsidized rent checks. (41 entities)
 - This is currently in process. Ivy is currently creating a database of section 8 landlords in the community to initiate contact. Resultant referrals will be made through her and will allow her to document results in the outreach file. (Zero income renters are required by the housing authority to be referred to some employment program.)
11. Speaking with those in the Court system for participant referrals. For example, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Circuit Court, Drug Court, the Public Defender's Office and the County Department of Corrections.
 - This process is still in development.
12. A Career Consultant will be assigned the specific duty of following up with exited adults to case manage and report their actions after exit.
 - Debra Davis-Robinson has been assigned this responsibility. Debra currently does this for the dislocated worker program and is the resident toolbox expert. With her new Access database, she will have a process in place to facilitate tracking customers.
13. The area has worked with the local AVTS to develop an introductory program to office technology jobs that is comprehensive and affordable. This will begin

February, 2006. It is this comprehensive training program that is needed by this population to succeed as “college level” courses are often intimidating.

- There were three adult customers enrolled in the first cycle of this project. They should complete in June and will then be ready for job search. Their progress and future activities will be tracked and discussed at future weekly staff meetings. Anticipating positive outcomes, another cycle will be planned for this fall and serious outreach for recruitment to that program will begin closer to that time.

The circumstances surrounding the Adult customers that have already been enrolled in the program should be closely managed by assigning them to case work staff to ensure that they achieve maximum outcomes for higher earnings and credential attainment.

1. The Region is holding weekly meetings of administrative and Adult program staff to monitor program service. At these meetings current cases are to be reviewed for current services, plans for future services and how these services can be focused for positive outcomes. As mentioned above the Region has implemented the use of a performance matrix tool (attachment 2) and an Access database (attachment 3) to assist in tracking and monitoring case action and outcomes.

Local office staff should have weekly meetings to discuss the most current performance levels, the status of any new enrollments and the services necessary for the success of current customers.

1. See above.

The St. Charles County WIB (or one of its committees) should be holding monthly meetings to ensure that all remedial actions are being taken by staff; to review new elements for consideration and inclusion in the PIP; and ensure oversight.

- 1 At the December WIB meeting Chair Walter Tate asked for the creation of an ad hoc committee to monitor the implementation of the PIP and progress toward improvement. This committee would meet at least monthly. This committee first met in January 2006. Upon review of attendance at the January Executive Committee meeting it was noted that the attendance at the ad hoc committee meeting was the same as for the Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee (EQI). The Executive Committee then decided to assign this responsibility to EQI and to expand their schedule to have monthly meetings.

Formal performance Measure reports should be placed on each WIB meeting agenda and presented to the full board to ensure the WIB's oversight responsibility is fulfilled in meeting the new negotiated approved performance measures for 2005 and 2006.

1. The EQI Committee is the committee that is designated to review this information when received. As the PIP is implemented and as part of the follow-through they will review this information and interim reports prepared locally. The committee will include these in their report to the WIB and make appropriate comments on progress or lack thereof.

Staff should commit to monthly report updates provided to DWD, to submit and track evidence of the PIP being implemented.

1. The Region will provide monthly reports to the State Division of Workforce Development to update progress of the corrective action plan.

Consider the immediate identification of appropriate training of program, management or fiscal staff surrounding our particular circumstances to inform DWD of these and plan for deployment of said curriculum.

1. The WIB believes that there is a need for training but is unsure of the exact nature of what may be helpful. A discussion of current circumstances suggests that one area of need is in creative service strategies, especially in the context of limited resources. Another area of need may be in case management for outcomes and/or using toolbox for performance management.

Part II

In reviewing other policies and procedures that might assist in the effort to improve Adult program outcomes the Region has identified the following for further action:

1. In discussions arising from the Department of Labor sessions on common measures, it came to our attention that we may be limiting ourselves with our definition of self-sufficiency as it applies to determining appropriateness of intensive services. Currently we are using the standard established by the Missouri Women's Council. Broadening this definition would expand the potential service population and provide for opportunities for positive outcomes.
 - a. At this point we are looking at changing our definition to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of "low-income" for the St. Louis Metropolitan area contained in the current "Income Limits for Housing and Section 8 Programs." This will be presented to the Executive Committee for consideration and possible submission to the WIB as a local policy change. (See Attachment #5 for current levels.)
2. **The Region would like to request a waiver to develop an initiative to demonstrate use of common measures in the local area in lieu of the Adult Performance Measures as calculated in the Workforce Investment Act.**
(3/22/06)

Addendum (3/21/06):

DWD Inquiry: Please respond to how the region will identify those Non-UI Visitors that could be potential WIA adult participants and provide better out-reach to capture this audience.

The reports shared with DWD report a number for non-UI visitors to the Career Center. This is a head count of those coming through the front doors who do not

state they are here for four-week reporting. These individuals may be here for a counselor visit, a workshop or any of a number of other activities. Of those that are here for job search, the reception staff and the resource room staff are looking for indicators of a need for additional assistance. This is a frequent front door to other services in the center. At this time the process is mostly informal (not scripted) but will be discussed at a future staff meeting with an eye toward improving referrals. This will be on the agenda for the next staff meeting.

DWD Response: Also, the draft PIP is remiss in detailing what reports are needed that is not already being provided through Toolbox. Explicit detail as to what data needs to be identified within these reports will aid DWD in assisting the local region. Please explain what specific reports are in the system that you are having problems with. The local region should respond to this within the PIP so that DWD can specifically address those concerns.

The main item that is of concern to the Region is being able to match what is shown in the performance reports to what we believe we know locally. As I have mentioned before one problem is being able to match numbers, i.e. we show that a measure should apply to 5 cases and the performance report shows that 8 are included in the measure. We want to be able to compare the two lists to determine where we (or you) are making a mistake. In this situation the numbers are small and we can provide you our list for comparison, but in larger program areas (say our dislocated worker program) this could be a problem. With our next monthly report we will forward the list of cases we expect to be in each of the four adult measures during the current program year.

DWD suggestion: DWD recommends technical assistance training for all case managers and would be happy to provide the training, customized for all your region staff, as soon as feasible.

We agree with this suggestion. It appears that a good place to start will be in attaining a better command of how to use Toolbox to monitor and manage case flow. I know that a major problem from our end is being able to sort out exits by program and by quarter. A part of this is also being able to exclude non-formula funded programs.